



BOB RILEY
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALABAMA
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND MENTAL RETARDATION**
RSA UNION BUILDING
100 N. UNION STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 301410
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-1410



JOHN M. HOUSTON
COMMISSIONER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2008

*Contact: Office of Public Relations
334.242.3417*

**SEPTEMBER MARKS THE 19TH ANNUAL NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND
DRUG ADDICTION RECOVERY MONTH**

Governor to proclaim September 'Alabama Recovery Month'

MONTGOMERY – For more than 10 years during the month of September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has sponsored National Recovery Month. This year's theme is "Real People, Real Recovery." The Recovery Month observance highlights the societal benefits of substance abuse treatment, lauds the contributions of treatment providers and promotes the message that recovery from substance abuse in all its forms is possible. The observance also encourages citizens to take action to help expand and improve the availability of effective substance abuse treatment for those in need. Each year a new theme, or emphasis, is selected for the observance.

Recovery Month provides a platform to celebrate people in recovery and those who serve them. Each September, thousands of treatment programs around the country celebrate their successes and share them with their neighbors, friends, and colleagues in an effort to educate the public about treatment, how it works, for whom, and why. Substance abuse treatment providers have made significant accomplishments, having transformed the lives of untold thousands of Americans. These success stories often go unnoticed by the broader population; therefore, Recovery Month provides a vehicle to celebrate these successes.

Recovery Month also serves to educate the public on substance abuse as a national health crisis that addiction is a treatable disease, and that recovery is possible. Recovery Month highlights the benefits of treatment for not only the affected individual, but for their family, friends, workplace, and society as a whole. Educating the public reduces the stigma associated with addiction and treatment. Accurate knowledge of the disease helps people to understand the importance of supporting treatment programs, those who work within the treatment field, and those in need of treatment.

The department's Division of Substance Abuse Services has been hard at work, with the assistance of the Substance Abuse Advocacy Task Force made up of several partners, in coordinating several activities statewide to mark this important observance. The Governor will soon sign a proclamation declaring September as Alabama Recovery Month, and many successful events that were held last year will be offered again, as well as a few new opportunities. One of last year's most popular activities was Recovery Sunday which had approximately 800 participants and included national and local guest speakers in addition to special worship performances. The event was designed to meet one of the department's objectives in establishing and enhancing efforts with the faith-based community to encourage individuals seeking recovery. The 2nd annual Recovery Sunday event will be held on September 21 in Montgomery. In addition, a Recovery Rally, which was also held for the first time last year, will be offered again this year in Birmingham on September 20.

Two new opportunities that will be offered this year are a Sobriety 5K Run and a Recovery Art Show. The Sobriety Run will be held on September 13, in Birmingham and more than 200 individuals are expected to participate. The Recovery Art Show is co-sponsored by UAB and an open house featuring drawings, paintings, sculpture and photography depicting addiction in an artistic format will be held on September 17. Kent Hunt, Associate

Commissioner for the Division of Substance Abuse Services, said that, “Alabamians will have the opportunity to participate in events emphasizing the reality that thousands of Alabama citizens are enjoying lives in recovery from substance addiction. All the events will be fun, uplifting, inspiring and educational. I encourage everyone to find an event to participate in because the more we learn about the possibilities and realities of addiction recovery, the more likely we will be to seek recovery for ourselves or to help guide someone else toward recovery.”

RESOURCES

For more information on National Recovery Month, visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Recovery Month Web site at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov/>.

Information about Recovery Month events or substance abuse services in the state of Alabama can be obtained by contacting the DMH/MR Substance Abuse Division at (334)242-3961 or by visiting www.mh.alabama.gov.

###